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Opponents Level Fire at DA

By ALLAN KATZ

Four candidates for district attorney directed a drumfire of criticism at incumbent Jim Garrison at a West Bank political rally last night but Garrison wasn't on hand to reply to it.

Garrison, along with his opponents, had been invited to address a rally sponsored by the Aurora Gardens Civic Association, the Algiers Kiwanis Club and the Aurora Gardens Country Club at the country club.

Four candidates—Harry Connick, Charles Ray Ward, Ross Scaccia and Republican nominee Phil Trice—showed up but Garrison failed to appear.

A SPOKESMAN for the sponsoring groups, which turned out a crowd of more than 150, said Garrison had called and asked to send a substitute. The spokesman

ROSS SCACCIA

CHARLES WARD

PHIL TRICE

HARRY CONNICK

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said this was refused because the sponsoring groups wanted to hear Garrison. Garrison reportedly said he would try to appear but he did not.

For Trice, who will face the Democratic winner in an April general election, it was a rare appearance with the Democratic primary candidates. Trice, who has lived in New Orleans since 1939, said he served as an assistant district attorney in administrations prior to Garrison and before that helped found the city's Legal Aid Bureau in 1940.

Garrison's administration of his office and the handling of the Clay Shaw case were the primary targets of the four candidates who addressed the forum.

SCACCIA SAID Garrison tried only two cases in his seven and a half years in office "and has the dubious distinction of losing both, the most recent being the Shaw case."

Scaccia said his major disagreement with Garrison was over the Shaw case, which Scaccia said should never have been brought to trial on the basis of the "meager" evidence Garrison accumulated.

Trice, who said he has been an attorney for 27 years, told the audience that if he were DA he would not spend his time investigating "the murder of Sen. Robert Kennedy or the midnight ride of Sen. Edward Kennedy" but would concentrate "on those who advocate mob rule and desecrate our flag."

HE SAID ALSO he would have investigated the activities of Louisiana Loan and Thrift Inc.

"If I'm elected, I will run the DA's office," Trice said. "I won't turn it over to my assistants and I'll run it from Tulane and Broad — not the New Orleans Athletic Club."

Ward and Connick arrived late.

Connick said that Garrison has lost sight of the need to prosecute professional criminals. He charged that 1,100 bail bond jumpers have been arrested by New Orleans police and then vanished after making low bail bonds. He said many of these were arrested three, four and five times by police without ever being brought to trial.

"WHAT IS NEEDED, and what has been lacking, is swift prosecution," he said. "If I'm elected, I will be a good administrator. There won't be 1,100 bail bond jumpers during my tenure in office."

Ward said the "Clay Shaw debacle, the police burglary scandal and the Parish Prison scandal" all are undeniable indications that the city needs a change in public office holders "from top to bottom, and particularly in the DA's office."

Ward said Garrison is running on a platform of "no change" and said citizens who vote for Garrison should prepare for more trials of Clay Shaw and the attendant publicity.

WARD, TRICE and Scaccia said in answer to a question from the audience they would dismiss the present perjury charges against Shaw and the other 13 open indictments held over from the Shaw case.

"I have often wondered what Mr. Garrison will do if he loses again in the Shaw perjury case," Scaccia said. "I think perhaps he will try Mr. Shaw again on a charge of perjuring himself in the perjury trial."

Connick said he felt Garrison's case against Shaw was so weak that it should not have been brought to court but he would want to examine all the files in the case before committing himself to any action.

WARD AND Scaccia also directed some of their fire at Connick.

Scaccia said Connick's charges of bail bond jumping were based on a "few mistakes" that had been made out of 17,000 cases handled by the DA's office. He accused Connick of "scare tactics."

Ward said that Connick is the candidate of the reformers, "The Times-Picayune, the States-Item, Aaron Kohn and the Metropolitan Crime Commission, and the uptown intellectual snobs."

WARD SAID THE same "reformers" supported Garrison when he first ran eight years ago.

Connick said his only interest is in bringing to the DA's office "a sense of dignity and a spirit of hard work and dedication."

He said Ward and Scaccia both have been staff members in the incumbent DA's office but he never worked for Garrison.